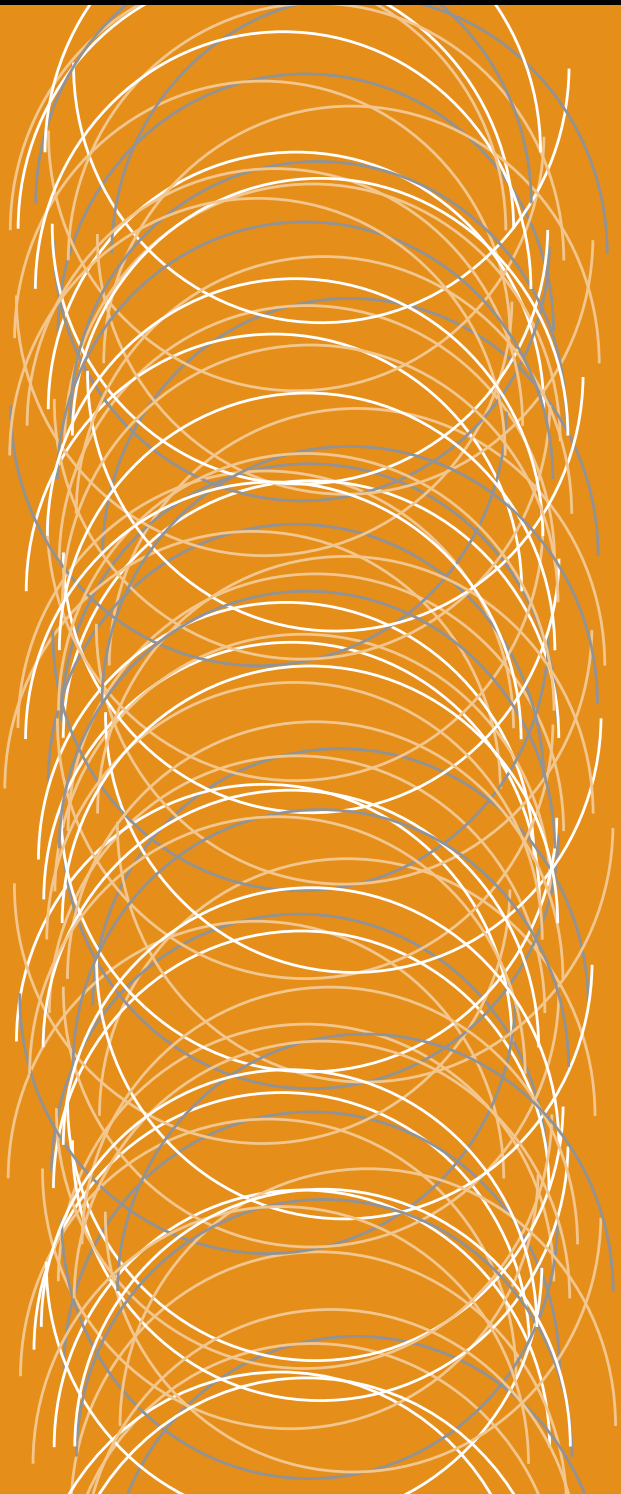


Australian Medical Council Limited

Accreditation Report: Review of the  
2020 comprehensive report from of  
Flinders University, College of Medicine  
and Public Health

AMC



Medical School Accreditation Committee  
November 2020

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April 2021

ABN 97 131 796 980  
ISBN 978-1-925829-40-2

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 The process for comprehensive report for extension of accreditation

The Australian Medical Council (AMC) document, *Procedures for Assessment and Accreditation of Medical Schools by the Australian Medical Council 2019*, describes AMC requirements for accrediting primary medical programs and their education providers.

In the last year of an accreditation period based on an assessment visit, the AMC can consider a request for an extension of accreditation via a comprehensive report. In submitting a comprehensive report, the education provider is expected to provide evidence it continues to meet the accreditation standards, and has maintained its standard of education and of resources.

Comprehensive reports require self-reflection, analysis of performance against the accreditation standards, and an outline of the challenges facing the college over the period of the possible extension of the accreditation. Without this assessment, the AMC does not have the evidence to determine if the college will meet the standards for the next period.

The AMC considers the submissions from the medical students' societies along with education provider's comprehensive reports.

If, on the basis of the report, the Medical School Accreditation Committee decides the education provider and the program of study continue to satisfy the accreditation standards it may recommend to the AMC Directors to extend the accreditation of the education provider and its program.

The extension of accreditation is usually for a period of three or four years, taking education providers to the full period of accreditation of ten years granted by the AMC between reaccreditation assessments. Following this extension, the provider and its programs undergo a reaccreditation assessment.

The AMC and the Medical Council of New Zealand work collaboratively to streamline the assessment of education providers which provide primary medical programs in Australia and New Zealand, and both have endorsed the accreditation standards. The two Councils have agreed to a range of measures to align the accreditation processes, resulting in joint accreditation assessments, joint progress and comprehensive reporting, and aligned accreditation periods. The AMC will continue to lead the accreditation process.

## 1.2 Decision on accreditation

Under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, the AMC can accredit a program of study if it is reasonably satisfied that:

- (a) the program of study, and the education provider that provides the program of study, meet the accreditation standard; or
- (b) the program of study, and the education provider that provides the program of study, substantially meet the accreditation standard and the imposition of conditions will ensure the program meets the standard within a reasonable time.

Having made a decision, the AMC reports its accreditation decision to the Medical Board of Australia to enable the Board to make a decision on the approval of the program of study for registration purposes.

Based on the comprehensive report provided, the AMC finds that Flinders University, College of Medicine and Public Health and its medical program meet the accreditation standards.

At their 10 December 2020 meeting, AMC Directors resolved:

- (i) to extend accreditation of the four-year Doctor of Medicine medical program of Flinders University, College of Medicine and Public Health by four years to **31 March 2025**.

## 2. Flinders University, College of Medicine and Public Health

### 2.1 Accreditation history

The medical program of Flinders University, College of Medicine and Public Health was first accredited by the AMC in 1994.

An overview of the College's accreditation and monitoring history is provided below:

Event	Findings against Standards	Outcome
1994: Accreditation	-	Accreditation granted for ten years to 1 July 2004 (Six-year BMBS)
1997: Accreditation	-	Accreditation granted for four years to 31 December 2001 (Four-year BMBS)
2000: Extension of accreditation	-	Accreditation granted for three years to 31 December 2004 (Four-year BMBS)
2004: Accreditation	-	Accreditation granted for four years to 31 December 2010
2009: Comprehensive report	-	Resulted in a material change assessment (change to pathway)
2010: Material change (change to pathway)	MEETS	Granted an extension of accreditation for four years to 31 December 2014
2012: Material change (transition to MD)	MEETS	Transition to MD not considered a material change
2014: Reaccreditation assessment	MEETS	Accreditation granted for a period of six years; that is until 31 March 2021, subject to satisfactory progress reports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Doctor of Medicine (MD)</li> <li>• Bachelor of Medicine / Bachelor of Surgery (BMBS) (N.B. accreditation of the BMBS ceased 31 December 2017 following its teach-out)</li> </ul> Conditions at accreditation: 13 Comprehensive report due in 2020.
2015-2019: Progress report	MEETS	2015: Two condition satisfied 2016: Two conditions satisfied 2017: Four conditions satisfied 2018: Two conditions satisfied 2019: One conditions satisfied
2020: Comprehensive report	MEETS	Two condition satisfied (All conditions now satisfied) Accreditation extended to 31 March 2025

A copy of the College's 2014 accreditation report can be found [here](#).

## 2.2 Flinders University Comprehensive Report

In its 2020 comprehensive report the College was asked to provide a report against the standards and its remaining two accreditation conditions.

The following was to be addressed for each standard:

1. **Analysis of strengths and challenges, and significant developments undertaken or planned.**
  - identification and assessment of factors that could influence the achievement of the college's goals over the next five years
  - a short summary of major developments since the last accreditation assessment
  - description of the college's development plans for the next five years, and significant milestones for their implementation.
  - Any matters that may affect the accreditation status of the programs, such as a change to capacity to meet the accreditation standards, or any change that may meet the definition of a major change to the program.
2. **College activity against AMC conditions (as required)**

## 2.3 Flinders University executive summary to comprehensive report

The Flinders University, College of Medicine and Public Health's Doctor of Medicine (MD) is recognised internationally for its innovative curriculum that delivers outstanding clinical and academic training, integrating clinical medicine with a strong underpinning in biomedical science.

The MD offers graduate entry in Adelaide and the Northern Territory, providing an alternative to the traditional pathway from secondary school to an undergraduate medical course.

The Flinders MD is a four year program that aims to develop the elements of knowledge, understanding and skill central to varied areas of medical practice, producing graduates well prepared to act as hospital interns and with potential to pursue a full range of medical specialties in subsequent training.

Flinders has a strong profile in medicine both nationally and internationally, and continues to be at the forefront of innovation in teaching and research. We provide rich and innovative student clinical placements and are leaders in the field of rural and remote health.

Throughout the MD the curriculum covers four broad themes: doctor and patient, knowledge of health and illness, health professions and society and personal and professional development. The program focuses on student-centred learning with longitudinal development of the knowledge, skills and personal and professional attributes required of a doctor. Advanced Studies provides students with a research and scholarship theme integrated across all four years of the MD through participation in research activities, students acquire a defined body of evidenced based knowledge from biological, clinical, epidemiological, social and or behavioural sciences.

The medical program curriculum continues to facilitate opportunities for students to pursue studies of choice that promote breadth and diversity of experience. The core curriculum is delivered across the full spectrum of health care environments in Australia, from large high-

acuity tertiary hospital settings to remote health clinic facilities in a corridor spanning from western Victoria, through South Australia to the Northern Territory. Exposure to clinical environments increases over the duration of the program to years 3 & 4 where the majority of learning takes place in clinical settings.

### 3. AMC Findings

#### 3.1 Summary of findings against the standards

The findings against the eight accreditation standards are summarised in the table below.

Standard	Finding in 2015 (including any requirements substantially met or not met)	Finding in 2020
1. Context of the Medical Program	Met (Standard 1.6 substantially met)	Met
2. Outcomes of the Medical Program	Met	Met
3. The Medical Curriculum	Substantially Met (Standards 3.2, 3.4 substantially met)	Met
4. Learning and Teaching	Met	Met
5. Assessment of Student Learning	Substantially Met (Standards 5.3, 5.4 substantially met)	Met
6. Monitoring and Evaluation	Met (Standard 6.1 substantially met)	Met
7. Students	Met	Substantially Met (7.1.3, 7.2.4 are substantially met)
8. The Learning Environment	Met (Standard 8.1 substantially met)	Met

#### 3.2 Detailed findings against the standards

Providers must satisfy conditions on accreditation in order to meet the relevant accreditation standard. The AMC provides feedback on the conditions using the following:

<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<i>The education provider may not meet the related accreditation standard and AMC should investigate further</i>
<b>Not Progressing</b>	<i>No progress or overly slow progress.</i>
<b>Progressing</b>	<i>Indicates satisfactory progress against the recommendation, with further reporting necessary.</i>
<b>Satisfied and Closed</b>	<i>The education provider has satisfied all requirements and can cease reporting against the Condition. Condition is marked as closed.</i>



## Standard 1: The Context of the Medical Program

Standards cover: governance, leadership and autonomy, medical program management, educational expertise, educational budget and resource allocation, interaction with health sector and society, research and scholarship, staff resources and staff appointment, promotion and development

Summary of accreditation status	2015: Met.	2020: Met
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### College developments against Standard 1

There have been substantial changes relevant to Standard 1 since 2014, including:

- Reorganisation of health services in South Australia has resulted in some loss of hospital access and removal of State Health Department funding for non-academic clinical teachers.
- Teaching specialist and research academic positions established.
- The program has integrated its rural and remote resources in the Northern Territory and in South Australia into a single structure, with leadership in both research and education and has developed a Rural and Remote Health Strategy.

### Governance

- Reorganisation of the University into a College structure, moving the medical program into the College of Medicine and Public Health, supported by professional staff within a portfolio model of shared services.
- Governance for the medical program has been revised and now headed by the Medical Program Board.
- An Assessment Risk and Audit Reference Group has been established.

### Future plans

- Formerly complex reporting lines and processes for management of academic workloads are being revised; the importance of relationships with clinical stakeholders is being recognised (including academic title holders); research training is being emphasised; and a consumer engagement strategy is being developed in relation to the research program.
- The role of the former subsidiary Foundation and Clinical Phase committees, which were management and implementation focused and communicated directly with teaching, professional and clinical staff, is under review.
- The University is developing its first Reconciliation Action Plan.

### Activity against Conditions from 2015 accreditation report

Condition	Due	Status
1 By 1 November 2015, confirm that formal arrangements are in place for 2016 for medical students in the Northern Territory from James Cook University (Standard 1.6).	2015	Satisfied
2 By 31 May 2016, confirm that a formal agreement with James Cook University for 2016/17 regarding their students in the Northern Territory is finalised (Standard 1.6).	2016	Satisfied
3 By 31 December 2015, confirm that the School's contracts with the Northern Territory Government and Commonwealth regarding the Northern Territory Medical Program are finalised (Standard 1.6).	2015	Satisfied

## Standard 2: The Outcomes of the Medical Program

Standards cover: purpose and medical program outcomes

Summary of accreditation status	2015: Met.	2020: Met
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### College developments against Standard 2

The College has developed a College Strategy for all courses of study within the College of Medicine and Health Sciences.

Program outcomes remain unchanged and are consistent with AMC graduate outcome statements.

The mapping process indicates that most of the AMC graduate outcome statements map to multiple learning outcomes.

The College continues to run three pathways for its Doctor of Medicine program, all achieving the same set of program outcomes; the standard pathway, the Northern Territory Medical Program, the Parallel Rural Clinical Curriculum (in which students spend a full year immersed in rural community settings in Year 3).

### Activity against Conditions from 2015 accreditation report

Nil

### Standard 3: The Medical Curriculum

Standards cover: duration of the medical program, the content of the curriculum, curriculum design, curriculum description, indigenous health and opportunities for choice to promote breadth and diversity

Summary of accreditation status	2015: Substantially met	2020: Met
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#### College developments against Standard 3

The introduction of the Advanced Studies (research) requirements and the adoption of Programmatic Assessment and Learning.

Detailed learning outcomes developed to support the program outcomes in 2019.

Curriculum changes since 2014 include:

- the introduction of a 'procedures passport' in Years 3 and 4
- 'Just in time' procedures teaching during orientation for Year 3
- integration of the former GP intensive week during Year 2
- enhancement of simulation teaching related to 'deteriorating patients'
- development of the transition to internship program
- updated teaching methods for Health Professions and Society

#### Activity against Conditions from 2015 accreditation report

Condition:	Due:	Status:	
4	Demonstrate that the results and outcomes of the 2015 Year 2 students remain consistent with those of previous years with regard to Health, Profession and Society outcomes following introduction of the Advanced Studies theme (Standard 3.2).	2016	Satisfied
5	Demonstrate that the learning outcomes and objectives for all stages of the program are accessible to all teaching and clinical staff, and provide evidence that clinical staff have satisfactory direction from the School, including from theme and discipline leads, on the curriculum content (Standard 3.4).	2016	Satisfied
6	In 2017, following the implementation of the 2016 Year 3 Advanced Studies program, demonstrate that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• student results and outcomes remain consistent with those of previous years with regard to Health, Profession and Society outcomes;</li><li>• at all Year 3 sites, that clinical contact time for Year 3 students remains satisfactory; and</li><li>• that clinical skills assessment outcomes remain consistent with previous years (Standard 3.2).</li></ul>	2017	Satisfied

## **Standard 4: Teaching and learning methods**

Areas covered by this standard: teaching and learning approach and methods

<b>Summary of accreditation status</b>	2015: Met	2019: Met
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### **College developments against Standard 4**

Developments since the accreditation assessment include:

- the introduction of Advanced Studies (research requirement),
- Team Based Learning
- a professionalism framework
- an 'introduction to internship' module
- a range of updates to clinical skills teaching sessions

### **Activity against Conditions from 2015 accreditation report**

Nil

## Standard 5: The Curriculum – Assessment of Student Learning

Standards cover: assessment approach, assessment methods, assessment feedback and assessment quality

<b>Summary of accreditation status</b>	2015: Substantially met	2020: Met
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### College developments against Standard 5

The key development has been the implementation of a programmatic assessment for learning (PAL) approach.

There have been revisions to enhance clarity of decision making by Exam Boards and to improve consistency of assessment of portfolios.

An Assessment and Risk Reference Group has been established to help with ongoing quality assurance in assessment and a systematic evaluation of PAL and other assessment components commenced in early 2020. Steps have been taken, since 2019, to improve communication about assessments.

### Activity against Conditions from 2015 accreditation report

Condition:	Year to be met:	2020 Status:
7 By 1 November 2015, finalise the assessment of competencies related to research skills for Year 3 in 2016 (Standard 5.3).	2015	Satisfied
8 Demonstrate improved feedback following summative assessments to those students who will remain under the existing assessment structure (i.e. those who will not immediately transition to programmatic assessment when this is introduced) (Standard 5.3).	2016	Satisfied
9 Demonstrate an increase in formative assessment and feedback to students (Standard 5.3).	2016	Satisfied
10 Show improved calibration and consistency in the conduct of 'within-rotation' clinical assessments across all sites (Standard 5.4).	2016	Satisfied

## Standard 6: The Curriculum - Monitoring

Standards cover: monitoring, outcome evaluation and feedback and reporting

Areas covered by this standard: program monitoring; evaluation; feedback, reporting and action

Summary of accreditation status	2015: Met	2020: Met
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### College developments against Standard 6

Responsibility for monitoring the quality of the course now rests with the Medical Program Board, and with the College Dean, Education.

An Evaluation Coordinator was appointed in 2015 to support this function

The evaluation framework centres on:

- Curriculum access and stability;
- Assessment transparency and load
- Communication/relationships between the university and teaching clinicians;
- The student journey

The Learning Coach initiative and Year 3 Longitudinal Attachment Programs were evaluated during 2019. Findings were generally positive, with some consequential changes.

External reviews of the support provided to Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander medical students and of the new programmatic approach to learning were completed in 2020. Key recommendations are being implemented.

### Activity against Conditions from 2015 accreditation report

Condition:	Year to be met:	Status:
11 Implement a systematic 'whole-of-school' process for the gathering of student feedback in Years 3 and 4 across all sites (Standard 6.1.2).	2016	Satisfied

## Standard 7: Implementing the Curriculum - Students

Standards cover: student intake, admission policy and selection, student support, professionalism and fitness to practise, student representation and student indemnification and insurance

Summary of accreditation status	2015: Met	2020: Substantially Met
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*Standards 7.1.3 and 7.2.4 are substantially met.*

### College developments against Standard 7

There have been some fluctuations in cohort numbers, which have caused concerns in the student body about capacity in placements as larger cohorts move into later years of the program. The College reported liaison with a range of local health services to expand placement capacity and engagement with students in response to their concerns. The College is planning additional support via placement facilitators at clinical sites.

An annual sub quota is available for rural origin applicants. These entry streams are supported by infrastructure within Flinders Rural Health SA, funded. Up to 24 places for rural origin students are available as part of Parallel Rural Clinical Curriculum pathway. These students spend their entire third year of the medical program in one of four rural locations in South Australia.

The Northern Territory Medical Program pathway continues to admit 24 students per year, prioritising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and local students.

An external review of the recruitment, retention and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students has been undertaken and evidence of implementation of some recommendations, eg on-site support from Elders on campuses and scholarships was provided. There are further recommendations to be addressed. These need to be monitored and evaluated and, for this reason, standard 7.1.3 was determined to be substantially met.

The College reported a range of University support services available to medical students, including at rural locations. Additionally, a Student Wellbeing Committee has been established to lead professional development sessions to support academic and senior staff manage student wellbeing.

In relation to professionalism and fitness to practice, a new Work Integrated Learning policy requires students to demonstrate compliance with relevant legislation and professional obligations before starting placements. Academic supervisors are responsible for confirming medical students' fitness to practice.

There continues to be a structure for student representation across all learning sites in South Australia and the Northern Territory and for student representation within key committees, including the College Education Committee and the Medical Program Board.

The College provided documentary evidence of relevant policies and process, including the Student Complaints and Appeals policy. The mechanism for appeals in relation to the selection requires some clarification and therefore standard 7.2.4 is substantially met.

The Committee agreed that this set of standards is *substantially met* overall, in view of work required to implement the recommendations on the external review of the recruitment, support and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and the need to clarify the admissions appeals process in College documentation.

### Activity against Conditions from 2015 accreditation report

Nil

## Standard 8: Implementing the Curriculum - Learning Environment

Standards cover: physical facilities, information resources and library services, clinical learning environment and clinical supervision

Summary of accreditation status	2015: Met	2020: Met
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### College developments against Standard 8

Facilities have been upgraded, including:

- the addition of digital facilities in lecture theatres at Flinders Medical Centre (FMC), in Darwin and in the rural program.
- enhancement of lighting/fencing/security to increase security for students at rural sites.
- major renovations of the Medical Library and the FMC tutorial rooms.
- an additional University library that has 24 hour opening and study rooms.

The program acknowledges the pressure on clinical placements following the closure of the Repatriation Hospital and downgrade of acute services at Noarlunga Hospital. Negotiations to increase clinical placements are underway and a positive collaboration has been developed with the South Australia Local Health Network. There are plans to build an aged care and dementia facility on the Repatriation General Hospital site and a plan to increase acute services at Noarlunga Hospital. The program is also liaising with private hospitals to secure sufficient clinical placements for the larger student numbers anticipated over the next two years. The program has increased facilities in general practice and intends to increase GP placements over the next five years.

### Activity against Conditions from 2015 accreditation report

Condition	Due	2020 Status
12 Provide adequate student common room facilities at the Flinders Medical Centre appropriate to the student numbers at that site (Standard 8.1).	2016	Satisfied
13 Modernise the audio-visual resources in the problem-based learning tutorial rooms in the main Flinders Medical Centre building so that they adequately support these tutorials (Standard 8.1).	2016	Satisfied





